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OCT 4 1984

3400 Forest Pest Management

Willaby Flats Evaluation, Quinault Ranger District

Forest Supervisor, Olympic NP

On September 21, Gregory M. Filip, Plant Pathologist from Forest Pest Management of the Regional Office, visited the Quinault Ranger District. Purpose of the visit was to examine the Willaby Flats area for insect and disease problems. Plans have been formulated to develop this area into a campground. Greg was accompanied by Gerry Dixon, from the District, who plans to use the area to satisfy a requirement for silvicultural certification.

In August 1981, the Willaby Flats area was examined by a team from the Forest and Regional Office who were developing a vegetative management plan for the adjacent Willaby Campground (see Hazard Tree Evaluation-Quinault Ranger District, August 26, 1981). The stand in the Willaby Flats area is composed primarily of second-growth (80 to 100 years) western hemlock with scattered old-growth western hemlock, Douglas-fir, Sitka spruce, and western redcedar. A few islands of concentrated old growth also occur in the area. About 40 camping units are planned with possible future expansion.

The most conspicuous disease in the stand is dwarf mistletoe (*Arceuthobium tsugense*) in both the old- and second-growth hemlock. Several large witches'-brooms caused by the mistletoe were observed in hemlock. These may pose a hazard if directly above camping units and should be removed before the site is opened to the public. Also, pruning of infected branches will prolong tree life and enhance vigor. Witches'-brooms could be a future hazard in the campground, since many of the second-growth hemlocks are infected. The most severely infected trees could be removed during road and unit construction.

No other major insect and disease problems were observed in the stand. However, as mentioned in the first report, hemlock and spruce are prone to severe decay due to their thin bark and non-resinous wood and, therefore, are not ideally suited as campground trees. Residual trees should be preferably cedar or fir with hemlock chosen last. Also, hemlock root systems are shallow and could suffer from soil compaction and windthrow. It will be extremely important to keep pedestrian traffic restricted to roads, units, and trails to prevent soil compaction and tree wounding. The lush undergrowth, characteristic of the Quinault area, should help restrict pedestrian traffic and should be retained during site development.

We recommend that the area be inspected again for hazard trees during road and unit layout so that such trees can be identified and removed in conjunction with road construction. Also, any trees, particularly hemlocks, that are damaged during road and unit construction, probably should be removed at that time.

If FPM can be of further assistance, please contact us.

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cc:

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GMFilip:pjj Doc. 3726E 10/2/84